A CULTURAL GUIDE TO

CANADA

OVERSEAS BRIEFING CENTER
FOREIGN SERVICE INSTITUTE
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

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102 INTRODUCTION

Americans going to Canada for their next post may wonder why a Cultural Guide to Canada has even been written. Many Americans think of Canada as a mere extension of the States—only colder and partly French-speaking, a myth this culture guide attempts to dispel. To be sure, the differences are not great. Like the United States, Canada has sophisticated cities, beautiful suburbs, productive farmland, and breathtaking national parks. People are descended from many of the same cultures as Americans and look alike. Canadians work, live, and play much as Americans do. Day-to-day activities are much the same, and adjusting to the differences mentioned in this guide will probably not be difficult.

However, Americans living in Canada who take time to research the country and observe its way of life will find significant differences in attitude. Canadians have a different set of beliefs and a different national experience than Americans do. The Canadian authors referred to in this guide all maintain that a distinctive Canadian identity exists. Although some Canadians and Americans may disagree with these authors' views, the question of who Canadians are remains a riddle. The purpose of this guide is to take a deeper look into Canadian culture, to try to explain the reasons for the differences that do exist, and to encourage you to appreciate Canadians and their country.

Many specific references or examples are drawn from the National Capital Region (NCR) of Canada (includes the cities of Ottawa, Cumberland, Gloucester, Kanata, Nepean, Village of Rockcliffe Park, and Vanier in Ontario and Hull, Aylmer, Gatineau, and Cantley in Quebec), because that is the area most familiar to the majority of Americans posted to Canada.

103 CANADIAN-UNITED STATES DIFFERENCES

103.1 Attitude Toward Climate

Weather is the backdrop for Canadian life much more so than for life in most of the United States. It is a topic for discussion at any social event (particularly in winter), as are ways to enjoy it or strategies for escaping it.

Canadian winters are extremely cold, particularly in the interior of the country. Ottawa is known among diplomats as the world's second coldest capital (only Ulaanbaatar is colder), and the other cities of central Canada also have frigid climates. Vancouver, on the west coast of British Columbia, is the only major city in Canada that has an average January temperature above 32º F. Rather than being defeated by the weather, Canadians take full advantage of it, skating on outdoor rinks, skiing, walking on clear days, and hosting world-famous winter festivals.

The winter carnival in Québec City (Carnaval de Québec) is especially well known. One of the highlights is a boat race across the partially frozen St. Lawrence River. Competitors leave their boats and slide them across the ice floats, then leap back in to paddle through open water. The danger adds to the excitement of spectators and competitors alike. Battling the ice and elements like this regenerates the pride French Canadians have in the role their ancestors played in the fur trade that led to the exploration of this vast land.

Ottawa's winter festival, Winterlude, takes place in February when temperatures are often well below 0º F. People take advantage of the weather to carve huge ice and snow sculptures. On Dows Lake there is an annual sculpting competition, some of whose entries are incredibly intricate. In 1988, one portrayed a horse and carriage that had broken through the ice: it portrayed people and horses struggling to free themselves from the freezing water against a backdrop of trees and bridges. There are usually a few that make political statements and others are just fun, like an enormous woman doing a belly flop off a tiny diving board. In addition to the sculptures, there are trotting races on the Rideau Canal, dog sled demonstrations, balloon rides, hockey games, and more. For three weekends Ottawa is transformed, and millions come out to celebrate. Smaller winter festivals are held in towns throughout Canada, each with parties, games, and competitions reflecting the community.

Part of the reason Canadians can enjoy winter is that they know how to dress for it. Canadian companies make especially warm boots, gloves, jackets, and hats that keep you warm on even the coldest day. The traditional hat is a toque—a closely knitted cap that sometimes comes with a tassel or ties under the chin. These are worn by men and women alike casually, but only by men when going to work. Warmth is more important than elegance to Canadians in winter with regards to outdoor clothing, but their winter indoor clothes follow the same trends and fashions as do American indoor clothes.

Canadians are also expert at handling snow. In many cities the streets are plowed as soon as the first flakes fall, and then liberal amounts of salt and/or sand are dropped. Experiments are underway now with other methods of melting snow, as salt is harmful to cars, garages, boots, and so on, but to date no good substitute has been found. In the Maritime provinces snow is allowed to pile up along the streets, occasionally up to fifteen feet high, but in most interior cities it is carted away at night. In Ottawa mini-snowplows clear the sidewalks while huge plows, snow blowers, front-end loaders, and dump trucks remove snow from the streets. This is important, as in particularly cold winters more than 100 inches may fall without melting. Recently there has been less snow and alternating cold spells and thaws. But sometimes even mild winters can bring disastrous weather—during the relatively warm winter of 1997–98, an ice storm hit Québec and southeastern Ontario, resulting in massive losses of power and water throughout the region, as well as significant property damages. Lingering effects can be seen primarily through the loss of trees in the heavily forested area.

Many Canadians take winter vacations in Florida or the Caribbean if they are from Eastern Canada; in Hawaii or California if they are from Western Canada. Some “snowbirds” return to the same spot every year and even purchase real estate in the south, which they rent out when not living there. It is even possible to buy Canadian newspapers in Florida during the winter, so many Canadians take refuge from the cold winters there.

It is easy to get the mistaken impression that winter is the only season in Canada. Even more because of its late arrival, spring is welcomed enthusiastically. In many communities there are festivals celebrating the coming of spring. In Ottawa the Tulip Festival includes a parade of boats along the Rideau Canal, initiating the boating season. The city is abloom with tulips given to Ottawa each year by the Dutch government to thank the city for welcoming members of the Dutch Royal Family who sought refuge there during World War II. The displays around Dows Lake are particularly magnificent. Many Canadians have cottages on lakes that they usually open up Victoria Day weekend (a week before the American Memorial Day) and then close on Canadian Thanksgiving, (which is the American Columbus Day).

Canadian summers are surprisingly enjoyable, with warm days and cool evenings. Occasionally there are hot spells, especially in the country’s interior, but they are usually brief. During summer, Canadians gather with friends and family for casual barbecues, outings to the beach, trips to the cottage, or walks in the parks.

Autumn in eastern Canada is beautiful because of the abundant, colorful foliage, but short. As soon as autumn comes, Canadians start concentrating on their winter hobbies: skiers, hockey players, and skaters get out their equipment for the upcoming season; others make plans for a trip south.

Since relatively few people in the world inhabit areas that get as cold as Canada, some suggest that Canadians think of themselves as survivors. Among these survivors you might suspect smugness (because they are tough enough to put up with such winter weather) or envy (toward those who inhabit milder climates). Canadians, however, are adaptable like other people and have adjusted to their homeland’s climate with impressive success.

103.2 Population Distribution

103.3 History

Native Americans lived in most areas of Canada long before Europeans arrived. The search for new trade routes and the European demand for fur pelts brought French and English settlers, businessmen, and missionaries to North America. Rivalries between the French and English led to open conflict. Under the Treaty of Paris in 1763, France lost most of its once vast empire. Canada adopted a British system of government when it confederated into a modern, independent nation in 1867. Canada is a member of the British Commonwealth, and Queen Elizabeth II is head of state. Loyalty to the Queen is deeply embedded in older Canadians of British descent.

Canada did not become a nation through an American-style revolution; it evolved into a nation and is in fact still in the process of building itself. Some observers contend that Canadian loyalty is much stronger at the regional than at the national level due to geographic factors, varying economic interests, ethnic diversity, and the like. Canadians, bounded on the north by cold, desert-like and sparsely populated terrain and on the south by the powerful United States, are divided psychologically along the population belt. Residents of British Columbia, cut off from the rest of Canada by the Rocky Mountains, relate more to Americans on the west coast than to other Canadians. Albertans, residing in one of Canada's most resource-rich provinces, often differ with Ottawa's political decisions regarding energy policies. Ontario enjoys substantial economic and political benefits as the most populous and prosperous province. Residents of the Atlantic provinces (Newfoundland, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward Island) depend heavily on fishing, and their income and employment levels reflect the temporal nature of the industry. Québec, the home of most French-speaking Canadians, is the most unique province in Canada and has greatly influenced Canadian politics, recently particularly in the 1970s and 1990s.

Despite regional differences in Canada, a major force causing the independent colonies to unite in 1867 was a perceived need to resist incorporation—peaceful or otherwise—into the United States. Although most Canadians no longer believe this is a possibility (at least politically), some still worry that the threat exists. Many Canadians fear an American economic “takeover” of their country, particularly with the implementation of the Free Trade Agreement (FTA) and North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA).

Distinctive national symbolism is quite recent. "O Canada," originally a colonial song known to French, not English-speaking, Canadians, is now the national anthem. The adoption of a uniquely Canadian flag came less than forty years ago: a red maple leaf on a white and red background became Canada's official flag in February 1965. Canada Day, July 1, is the national “independence” holiday and is celebrated with fireworks and festivities. Canadian Thanksgiving is celebrated on U.S. Columbus Day and is not nearly as significant as Thanksgiving Day in the United States. Canadians get only the actual Monday of Thanksgiving off, so most celebrate on the Sunday and use Monday as a vacation or travel day.

Canada projects itself, maintains Michael Kaufman (*New York Times* correspondent in Ottawa in 1983), as a country with a benevolent government that formulates and implements protective and nurturing policies. Canada provided sanctuary to refugees from Indochina and draft resisters from the United States. Its troops have supported various United Nations peacekeeping missions. Canada has continually encouraged greater understanding and cooperation between rich and poor countries.

103.4 French Canadians and Bilingualism

In 1980 and again in 1995 the province of Québec voted by a small margin to remain part of Canada. The years of separatist violence have passed, but Québec and its French-Canadian residents (Québecois) remain different from the rest of Canada. All throughout their history, French Canadians have desired to maintain their distinct Roman Catholic culture, which is predominantly English-speaking and non-Catholic, on the North American continent. They have been, and still are, concerned about their cultural survival in this situation. The provincial motto, written on Québec license plates ("Je me souviens"—"I remember") calls upon the Québecois to remember their past, their history, their customs, their traditions, their religion, their roots ... implicitly, their differences from other Canadians.

The key to Québecois survival is the retention of their own language—French. The British government respected this desire and allowed French Canadians special privileges. In 1988 Québec implemented a law making it illegal to display signs outside businesses in any language other than French. This and other actions have prompted many Anglophones' exasperation with the special relationship that Québec enjoys, and some, consequently, are less concerned about keeping Québec in the confederation, according to Jeffrey Simpson, a respected columnist for the Toronto *Globe and Mail*.

Québecois separatist politics tend to influence greater Canadian domestic politics in waves. The wave crested once in the 1970s, when the Front de Libération du Québec/Québec Liberation Front (FLQ) kidnapped and murdered Québec Vice Premier and Minister of Labor Pierre Laporte, and again with the extremely narrow defeat of a separatist referendum in 1995. However, the tide is currently on its way out. The 1998 Québec provincial election brought to power the Parti Libéral du Québec/Québec Liberal Party, which is not in favor of Québec sovereignty, but instead of greater autonomy within the Canadian confederation. Also dealing a blow to the Québec separatist movement was a 1998 decision by the Supreme Court of Canada decreeing that Québec may not unilaterally secede from Canada, but that secession may only be accomplished through Constitutional amendment.

Francophones (27 percent of Canada's population) have been taught to respect Canada's British heritage. However, they do not necessarily share their Anglophone compatriots' loyalty to Commonwealth commitments elsewhere in the world or to the British Royal Family. Instead, they emphasize their French culture, often at the expense of their Canadian identity. Both the Conservative government of the 1980s and early 1990s and the recent Liberal government have strongly supported Canada's participation in "La Francophonie," an entity comprising all the world's French-speaking states.

The province of Québec is 77 percent French-speaking and 18 percent English-speaking. Historically, French Canadians were at an economic disadvantage compared with English Canadians, as the Roman Catholic Church encouraged their rural and conservative lifestyle, discouraging Québecois participation in British-controlled commercial pursuits. The "Quiet Revolution" in the 1960s and 1970s diminished the role of the church in Québec, where the birth rate has plunged to the lowest rate of any province. Many Francophones, frustrated by the economic situation or disillusioned with Québec politics,

have moved to Ontario. And, since the early 1900s, French Canadians have moved by the thousands to the United States for better economic opportunities. Their descendants are most prevalent in the New England states.

Bilingualism is a nationally sensitive issue. In Ontario, the official provincial language is English despite a large French-speaking population. However, bilingual signs are very common in eastern Ontario. The federal government offers its services in both French and English, and Ottawa schools often offer programs in both languages. New Brunswick is Canada's only bilingual province.

Bilingualism annoys many Anglophones, particularly Western Canadians, because they see it as aggression, unwarranted intrusion, or wasteful duplication in their lives. Where getting a job or better pay requires bilingualism, emotions run strong. In some areas, forced French/English bilingualism seems to discredit the importance of other languages, such as Mandarin in British Columbia, which are more widely spoken in the region than French. However, as noted earlier, younger Anglophone Canadians, many of whom learn French in school (especially in Ottawa), may not be as frustrated as older generations by bilingualism requirements.

104 SOCIAL CUSTOMS AND INTERACTIONS

104.1 The Canadian Mosaic

Canada's earliest settlers were from Britain and France. Since the 18th century they have been joined by immigrants from all over the world. Rather than coming to a "melting pot," as did new arrivals in the United States, Canada has encouraged its immigrants to maintain their own cultures, creating what has come to be known as the "Canadian mosaic." Ottawa has encouraged this heterogeneity by funding Saturday language classes for various ethnic groups, promoting ethnic festivals and artistic groups, and offering government services in both French and English. Assimilation obviously occurs to some extent, but the degree varies among ethnic groups: Scandinavian and Dutch newcomers blend in faster than Italians, Germans, Poles, and Ukrainians. The diversity of the population is present in everyday life. In different areas of Canada there are Italian and Chinese communities, onion-shaped domes of Orthodox churches, ethnic restaurants and grocery stores.

It is difficult to make generalizations about social customs in Canada as they vary greatly according to region, ethnic background, and economic situation. English-speaking Canadians tend to entertain much as their counterparts do in the United States. French Canadians usually prefer French cuisine, with occasional Canadian twists. A specialty in many homes is a very rich maple syrup pie. Canadians of other ethnic backgrounds usually entertain in the custom of their native country, an opportunity made possible by the wide variety of ethnic foods and groceries available in most cities.

104.2 Greetings

In all parts of Canada people shake hands upon meeting someone and make small talk, just as in the United States. The subject of the current weather conditions is almost invariably part of conversation. This, of course, is true to an extent in the United States, but in Canada the topic of weather takes on an emotional connotation not present in the more moderate climate areas of the Unites States.

During the winter, guests in snowy areas are expected to arrive at private homes wearing boots or galoshes. Women sometimes carry their indoor shoes in a small bag while men usually have their shoes on under their boots. If the host or hostess opens the door to guests, it is normal to greet him or her and then change footwear and remove your coat. However, if a waiter opens the door, it is customary to remove outer clothing before speaking with the host.

Official Americans in Ottawa often find it difficult to meet their neighbors because of the natural Canadian reserve and the number of double-income families. Even Canadians who move to Ottawa from other provinces complain about the "coldness" of the community. Americans often must take the initiative in these relationships, but their efforts are nearly always rewarded. When a friendship has been formed it tends to be long-lasting.

Canadians use the titles Mr. and Mrs., Miss, Ms., Dr. and Rev. as in the United States. The transition to first name basis seems a little faster in impersonal relations, such as the nurse at the doctor's office. Canadian ambassadors only use the title while actually assigned as an ambassador. Immediately upon returning to Canada, even if they are still working in the Department of External Affairs, they drop the title. Children usually address adults as Mr., Mrs., or Miss.

104.3 Interactions Within Groups

In social situations men and women interact like they do in the United States, mingling easily but occasionally separating after dinner. There is a considerable level of equality between the sexes, but often their interests are different because of gender roles more traditional than in the United States. Until recently it was expected that a man would have a career, but a woman would merely have a job to supplement the couple’s income.

Children interact with each other much as they do in the United States. Depending on where you live in Canada, children may have friends of many different backgrounds.

104.4 General Language Differences

Much is made of the differences between Canadians and Americans in language, even though they technically share the same mother tongue. Although Canada's two official government languages, French and English, dominate in eastern Canada, Canada's immigration policies over the years have attracted significant numbers of Middle Easterners, Asians, and Europeans. Recognizing the "mosaic" concept of the population, a number of other languages still can be heard across the country. Americans are

understood by all English-speaking Canadians, although our "southern" accent amuses them.

Probably the most distinct difference between Canadian and American speech patterns is the Canadian use of "eh" versus the American use of "huh." This is explained in amusing fashion in Orkin's book, *Canajan, Eh!!*:

> *Eh? Rhymes with hay. The great Canajan monosyllable and shibboleth, "eh?", is all things to all men. Other nations may boast their interjections and interrogative expletives, such as the Mare Can (American) "huh?", the Briddish (British) "what?", the French "hein?", but none of them can claim the range and scope of meaning that are encompassed by the simple Canajan "eh?" Interrogation, assertion, surprise, bewilderment, disbelief, contempt, these are only the beginning of "eh?" and already we have passed beyond the limitations of "huh?", "what?", "hein?" and their pallid analogies...*
>
> *Its commonest solo use is as a simple interrogative calling for the repetition of something either not heard because inaudible or, if heard, then not clearly understood. In this context "eh?" equals "What did you say?", "How's that?"...*
>
> *Forners (foreigners) are warned to observe extreme caution with "eh?" since nothing will give them away more quickly than its indiscriminate use. Like the pronunciation of (Saskatchewan) Skatchwan (only much more so), it is a badge of Canajanism which requires half a lifetime to learn to use with the proper panache....*

English spoken in some of the eastern provinces may initially be almost unintelligible to some Americans. People in these provinces tend to run words together and speak very quickly. The French used by the Acadians in New Brunswick is different from that used in Québec, which in turn differs markedly from the French spoken in France. Québec French is not as open to English influence as is the French used in France.

When listening to Canadian English, Americans will notice some British pronunciations, such as "project" (when used as a noun, it has a long "o" in Canada) and some unique pronunciations such as "oat" for "out." British spelling—aeroplane, favour, colour—is used in Canada, and the letter "z" is called "zed." Some of the differences in pronunciation, usage, and phraseology are regional, such as the Ottawa Valley accent. Commonly heard expressions in Ontario are "Is it ever hot!" "Go have a play" (said to a child instead of "go play"), "in hospital" ("the" omitted), "washroom" rather than "restroom." When stating time, Ontarians will say "quarter *to* 11" rather than the American "quarter *of* 11."

One important difference to note when filling out official forms is the order in which dates are written. For example, September 26, 1983, is written 26/09/83 rather than 9/26/83, and in official writing the date is given as 83-09-26.

In the back of this guide you will find a glossary of Canadian expressions that will help you blend into the Canadian linguistic culture.

104.5 Gifts and Bonuses, Visiting in Homes or Offices, Ceremonial Occasions

Social customs with regard to gifts and bonuses, visiting host country homes or offices, weddings, baptisms, confirmations, and funerals vary by ethnic background. At events with English Canadians, the customs will be very similar to those in the United States.

Temperatures in Canadian homes and public buildings are usually comfortable enough for normal indoor clothing. Exceptions are when homes are kept cool to conserve fuel or, in the summer, are warm due to lack of air conditioning.

104.6 Social Gatherings Outside the Home

Cottages or condominiums are used as retreats for family and friends, and as places to keep boat or ski equipment. They are not used as places to entertain merely for social or business reasons. Americans may be invited if they develop close friendships with a cottage-owner or are invited for a specific hunting or fishing trip. Offers to bring food or to pick up supplies on your way there are usually appreciated.

Canadian restaurants are plentiful, varied, and often very good. Eating out is popular and reservations are often recommended or required. Many older homes in Ottawa and in smaller Ontario communities have been turned into restaurants (in some places bed and breakfast establishments as well). These usually serve basic North American or British cuisine, although they may also offer some local specialties or a chef’s favorite. Within Ottawa and Toronto there are many ethnic restaurants reflecting the communities they serve. They can be very good and relatively inexpensive. In Québec the food is predominately French, with a Canadian flavor. Croissant restaurants are popular for lunch, although chains such as McDonalds are also common. The Canadian version of McDonald’s, Harvey’s, is extremely popular and the food is much better than at American fast food chains. Vancouver and Winnipeg are noted for the diversity of their restaurants; Halifax is famous for seafood, and Calgary for beef.
Bars in Ontario close at 2:00 a.m.; those in Québec remain open until 3:00 a.m. In the Ottawa area, people looking for a good bar scene often go to places in Hull (across the Ottawa River in Québec). The drinking age in Ottawa is 19; in Québec, 18. In Montréal many restaurants have a bring-your-own-wine policy and provide the glasses and corkscrew. In Québec the old-fashioned "men-only" taverns are being replaced by "brasseries," the Québec version of the English pub and the European cafe, for mixed company.

In both Québec and Ontario a traditional outing is to a "sucrerie," a maple syrup producer's operation, during the sugaring off season. Sucreries take place usually in late April when the temperatures are below freezing at night but above freezing during the day. In these conditions, the sap flows well for the production of the pure maple syrup for

which the region is known. The sucreries set up long tables and serve hearty breakfasts of pancakes, sausage, eggs, potatoes, and applesauce with unlimited quantities of maple syrup. They then give tours of their operation and sell their products.

Canadian families often have picnics and take walks in national and provincial parks. These parks are excellently maintained and well used by people who are proud of and care for them. Canadians usually abide by the rules, staying on paths, and leaving no trash and are irritated by those who do not. Banff National Park, in the Rocky Mountains west of Calgary, is the best known because of its magnificent scenery, wildlife, glaciers, and skiing, but all provinces and territories have parks. Many offer camping facilities as well as hotels. Some also have beaches with boats for rent. Canoeing and fishing are very popular in Canada, and groups will often get together to fly to the north to canoe or fish in a more exotic setting. In the winter, cross-country ski trails are laid out in many parks (the Gatineau just north of Ottawa in Québec offers many miles of groomed trails).

The Post Report provides information about clubs, organizations, and churches as well as the type of leisure and recreational activities pursued. In Ottawa, several local women's organizations plan activities for diplomatic wives and other women new to Ottawa. In none of the posts in Canada is there an American “community.”

105 DAILY LIFE

105.1 Telephone Service

Canada's telephone system is excellent and ties into the U.S. long-distance direct dial service. When you call public buildings and stores in Ottawa, the greeting is usually given in both French and English. The speaker will use his own language first but will not be offended if the caller prefers to use a second language. In Québec only French is used when answering the phone. Often the speaker will not understand English, but the Québecois are patient with struggling Anglophones and help them express themselves. This is particularly true if they realize the caller is not a Canadian. Throughout the rest of the country, English is the language most frequently used when answering the phones.

105.2 Mail

Canada's postal system is constantly being threatened with strikes by one or another of its unions. In 1981 the system was actually shut down for six weeks by its employees and there was another ten-day general strike in November 1997. On the whole, strikes have been limited in scope and are usually regional. However, mail service is erratic. It may take a letter a day or a week to reach a destination on the other side of town, and there are reports in the newspapers of letters having taken much longer. Because of the uncertainties of the postal system, the Embassy and several of the Consulates General use U.S. post offices for all incoming and outgoing mail. For more information on this see the Post Report.

Canadians rarely notice the difficulties of their postal system and seem surprised when Americans mention it. However, they use mail services like Purolator and Federal Express far more frequently than they used to.

105.3 Electronic Equipment

The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC), a government-owned company, offers television and radio programs in both French (through Radio-Canada) and English. The CBC specializes in talk shows with Canadian content, news broadcasts, and news analyses. Three particularly popular television programs are The National, an evening CBC news program; The Fifth Estate, a documentary show on CBC covering major news stories of the day; and Canada AM, a morning program like NBC's Today, which is carried on the private CTV network. Satirical shows are also extremely popular, such as This Hour Has 22 Minutes (a take-off on network news broadcasts) and The Royal Canadian Air Farce (a half-hour sketch comedy show).

There are many other privately owned television and radio stations offering the same variety of music, drama, talk, and game shows as do their American counterparts and it is possible to watch the major American networks, all of which broadcast from sites just south of the border. However, many Canadians feel that too much American culture is available on television. To combat the onslaught of American entertainment, the Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) legislates Canadian content on television and radio through the Broadcasting Act's "CanCon" (Canadian content) quotas. Radio content must be at least 35 percent Canadian (at least with regards to vocal popular music) from 6 a.m.–6 p.m. Monday through Friday. Television content (on private networks) must be 60 percent Canadian overall, 50 percent between 6 p.m. and midnight. Some shows produced in response to this demand, such as Anne of Green Gables, have been superb and are shown on American television.

Video stores are common in Canada, attesting to the number of homes that have VCRs. Home computers are also common. The Canadian computer industry is centered in Ottawa, where much software is produced for local, national, and international markets.

105.4 Newspapers and Magazines

More than 120 daily newspapers are published in Canada, approximately 80 percent in English and 20 percent in French. Cities in Québec have more French dailies than English, and in Nunavut the main newspaper is published in English and in the provincial language of Inuktitut. Most Canadian newspapers do not publish on Sundays, so Saturday papers play the role of U.S. Sunday papers. Newspapers from various cities in Canada as well as popular U.S. magazines and newspapers can be purchased at stores and hotels in large cities across the country, although often several days after publication. There is one Canadian national weekly magazine, *Maclean's*, and a Canadian edition of *Reader's Digest*.

105.5 Healthcare

Medical care is good to excellent in Canada and often inexpensive in comparison to the United States. Each province has a medical insurance plan, paid for by payroll deductions and/or the provincial income tax system, and covering virtually everyone.

Canadians are very proud of their medical care system. They recognize that it may not be as good as the best available in the United States but feel its universality more than compensates. Critics of the system point to the number of people who visit their doctors for minor illnesses they would treat at home if they had to pay for the service, and to the shortage of hospital beds that causes some patients to have to wait for months before receiving necessary surgery; but these critics are in the minority.

In recent years, the Canadian healthcare system has been plagued by lack of funds (causing the closing of some hospitals and overcrowding in the remaining ones) and the threat of striking doctors. While good care is still available, emergency rooms are bastions of overworked healthcare givers and restless patients. A person venturing into a Canadian emergency room or outpatient health clinic should be insistent about a diagnosis— if you suspect something specific is wrong, you should be adamant about getting tested for exactly that ailment or injury.
Most hospitals and doctors are located in the major metropolitan areas. In order to get doctors to work in more remote areas, provincial governments often have to offer large incentives. Even so, medical services are not as available in the north as in the south.

105.6 Daycare Centers and Home Care

There are daycare centers throughout Canada for children of working parents. Some are run in schools, others in private homes. There is extensive government monitoring and abuse is rare. Many Canadians prefer to have a babysitter in their own home, who can be easily located in most areas. Many are new Canadians trying to learn English; others want to supplement the family income. Daycare centers for the physically and mentally handicapped and for senior citizens are not as widely available. They tend to be in the large metropolitan areas and are run either by the school boards (for those of school age) or by the province. Door-to-door transportation is often provided by the government. Youth and family services and counseling are available in the major Canadian cities as well, with fees pegged to one's household income.

Home care for individuals recovering from illnesses is available in most parts of Canada. In Ontario the Victorian Order of Nurses also provides this service to senior citizens unable to care for themselves. They visit on a daily basis and provide whatever care is required. In addition, many cities have Meals on Wheels for shut-ins.

105.7 Pets and Plants

Like Americans, Canadians have individual tastes when it comes to pets. Some people have them and some do not. Plants are also very popular. They can take people's minds off the long winter and remind them that spring will come. Some Canadians spend many

winter evenings planning their gardens and, starting in April or May (depending on where they live), devote a great deal of time planting and caring for them.

105.8 Housing and Utility Costs

Canadian homes, excluding most in the far north, are similar to those in the northern United States. They may be freestanding houses, townhouses, duplexes, or apartments. They have good insulation (the government gives tax breaks to homeowners who upgrade their insulation) and are well maintained. New homes in the warmer areas of the country often have air conditioning, but few older structures have it installed. Most cities have large apartment buildings in their downtown cores. Further out are comfortable older homes. On the edges of the city there is tract housing, built very close together in communities where land is costly.

Most Canadians buy their homes. Mortgages are for one to five years, although they are amortized over twenty years or so. A new mortgage must be found at the end of the initial period. Occasionally, as in 1981, the increase in the interest rate is so high that non-working spouses are forced to seek employment, or families must sell their homes. Canadian tax law does not allow homeowners to deduct mortgage interest from their income tax. Therefore, housing is not a good investment and few people own more than one home. Each summer—the most popular moving season—many homes are on the market for sale and very few are available for rent.

Many Canadians fix up their homes themselves. On weekends it is not uncommon to hear the sounds of hammers, electric saws, or lawn-mowers. Once they have become comfortable in a neighborhood, most Canadians do not like to move. They prefer to add on to their home as their family grows.

Canadian yards reflect the personality of their owners. Some display magnificent formal gardens while others contain simple swing sets, hockey nets, or other evidence of the owners' interests. In the winter, in the colder areas of Canada, some families will hose down their backyards to create mini-hockey rinks where children can practice slap shots and goal tending.

Gas, electric, and oil heat are all widely available in Canada. The age of a home and the availability of natural gas lines determine which is used in any given location. Québec residents get cheap electric rates, thanks to the province's tremendous hydroelectric resources and the concerted effort to develop them. Heating fuel costs also vary by region and local usage, with oil being more expensive than natural gas. Most houses have rented water heaters.

105.9 Schools

Canadian education is run by local school boards under the control of the provincial government. This leads to considerable variation in philosophy, curriculum, availability

of French immersion programs, and the like, but in all provinces, except Québec, education is generally considered to be as good as that offered in the United States.

In most provinces there are two school systems, public and separate. The separate schools are usually run by the Roman Catholic Church but funded by property taxes and provincial and federal subsidies. If a parent chooses to send a child to a separate school, he or she simply notes this on his or her property tax so it will be properly directed.

Most elementary schools offer both a four-year-old kindergarten and a five-year-old kindergarten. The latter is compulsory and marks the start of formal education. Elementary education is very traditional with a mix of reading, writing, arithmetic, French, social studies, science, home economics, shop, music, art, and sports. Canadian history, culture, and geography are also stressed. Many parents in the Ottawa area opt for French immersion for their children, feeling that they must be bilingual to compete in the local job market. As a result, some English-language programs are so small that they cannot offer all the extras that would otherwise be available. Schools are acquiring computers as quickly as their budgets will allow; computers are being used extensively in elementary schools.

High schools, where resources allow, offer courses at four levels: basic for those still working on life skills; general for those who will be attending a vocational college or going directly into the work force; and the advanced and enriched for those bound for university. A student's record determines within which level he or she is eligible to study. In cases where there is disagreement between the student's family and the school board, final authority lies with the board.

Students in Ontario used to be required to attend high school through Grade 13 if they planned to attend university, but this is no longer true. Grade 13 will be phased out as of 2003, when a "double cohort" of graduating students (the last class of Grade 13 and the first of Grade 12) will graduate high school. Universities are preparing for the consequences of the "double cohort," which will result in twice as many students as before competing for spots in first-year programs. For students entering high school in Ontario, grades run 9–12, like in non-Québecois Canadian systems and American systems. In Québec students complete high school after grade 11 but must attend a junior college, CEGEP, if they plan to go to university.

A wide variety of courses is offered in high school. In addition to the basic curriculum of English, French, math, social studies, and science, there may be courses in other languages, economics, comparative religion, business, computers, music, art, and more. The selection will depend on the size of the school and on the philosophy of the school board. In most large cities there are technical, business, and art specialty high schools as well.

All universities and vocational colleges are under provincial jurisdiction. The process of applying to one is far simpler than in the United States, acceptance almost always being based on grade point average and not on essays, extra curricular activities, and

standardized test scores. SATs and ACTs are not required for Canadian university entrance. Grade 12 students (Canadians do not use the American freshman-sophomore-junior-senior distinctions in high school or university) are very relaxed about college planning, showing little of the tension and competitiveness so evident in American high schools. This relaxed attitude is typical of the Canadian approach to education at all levels.

Universities are more segmented than in the United States. A student applies for a particular program such as engineering or architecture and is accepted into or rejected by that program. If a student changes his major, he or she must reapply to a new program. Universities are very inexpensive for Canadians (those with diplomatic status also pay the reduced rate), making them available to most students. However, the failure rate during freshman year is extremely high at all but the most selective institutions—some say as few as 33 percent make it to the second year.

All school boards are required to meet the academic needs of all students. If they are unable to do so, they must buy space for that student in a school under another board with an appropriate program. This applies equally to students with learning disabilities and mental or physical handicaps.

Throughout Canada there are private day and boarding schools. They may offer a traditional education or subscribe to the Montessori or Waldorf approach. These schools tend to be less expensive than in the United States, although their fees are rising rapidly. In most locations it is the child with difficulties, who needs small classes or special education, is sent to a private school,. Public and separate schools are considered the normal path. Parents are encouraged to volunteer in the schools, but any criticism or input from them is discouraged.

106 RECREATION

106.1 Arts, Literature, and Museums

The Canadian government, through the Canada Council, has long given local artists grants allowing them the freedom to produce without conforming to the tastes of the public. In addition, the government has encouraged ethnic minorities to continue the artistic customs of their homelands. As a result, there is a great deal of innovative art being produced in Canada.

Until the 1920s most painters followed the European school, having studied either in England or on the Continent. During that decade, several painters, who later became known as the Group of Seven, developed a less traditional Canadian style that conveyed the harshness of the Canadian landscape. They worked quickly outside in winter, standing on snowshoes, to get a scene down on the top of a cigar box. They then went inside to transfer the scene to canvas. Their works encouraged others to break away from traditional subjects and styles and to experiment. Works by the Group of Seven can be seen in most major Canadian museums. One of the largest collections is in the Firestone

Museum in Ottawa, a museum containing only works by Canadian artists since the turn of the 20th century.

Throughout Canada there are numerous art galleries and shows where one can see, and usually buy, pieces by local and national artists. They work in all media and sometimes allow visitors to watch them in their studios.

In the major cities, galleries also display the work of Native and Inuit artists. The latter produce magnificent soapstone carvings portraying the people and animals of the far north. The inspiration for their works comes from the shape of the material and can be quite unique. By contrast, their paintings are stylized and traditional. Native artists work primarily in wood and silver, making jewelry and sculptures as well as replicas of more traditional items. The works of both groups can be seen in galleries and museums across Canada. One of the best collections is in the museum at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver. Not only are the exhibits impressive, but those works that cannot be displayed for lack of space are housed in drawers and on shelves open to the public for study. The Museum of Civilization in Hull, Québec (just across the river from Ottawa), also has an excellent collection. As the government begins to listen to demands, and as Native and Inuit communities become more politically savvy, more Native and Inuit artifacts previously on display in museums are being returned to their communities.

Canada also consistently produces world-class performing arts. The best-known groups include the Stratford Festival Company in southeastern Ontario, the Montréal Symphony, Toronto's Canadian Opera Company, the Royal Winnipeg Ballet, and the Canadian Brass Ensemble. All of these groups tour extensively throughout North America and occasionally Europe and the Far East. Many small cities and communities have their own orchestras and theater groups that perform locally.

The Canadian filmmaking industry has produced award-winning movies and documentaries in both French and English. The National Film Board of Canada, located in Ottawa, encourages these productions. Many Canadian actors, however, go to Hollywood for bigger roles and more publicity. While resenting the drain of talent to the south, Canadians never tire of reminding Americans where these popular actors and actresses got their starts.

Almost all Canadian towns and cities have libraries with good North American collections. Some major contemporary Canadian novelists are Margaret Atwood, Robertson Davies, and Margaret Laurence. A few Canadian historians and political journalists are cited in the Bibliography.

Canada is home to many different kinds of museums. There are traditional art galleries; science museums, such as the hands-on Science Center in Toronto offering lectures and exhibits for all ages and interests; the National Gallery in Ottawa, which was built to reflect the shapes of the buildings near it; Fort Gary, a recreation of a Hudson Bay Company outpost north of Winnipeg; the Notre Dame de Bonsecours Church in Montréal with its collection of model ships by sailors; and the entire old city of Québec, with its

magnificent architecture perched on the bank of the St. Lawrence River, to mention a few.

106.2 Recreational Sports

Many Canadians participate in some form of exercise or recreational sport. This phenomena of "getting fit" started when a study showed Canadians lagging far behind people of other countries in terms of physical fitness. They have since caught up.

Hockey is Canada's favorite sport. Children are taught to skate when they are only three or four years old and are introduced to either hockey or figure skating around the age of six or seven. Traditionally boys played hockey while the girls worked on their jumps and spins. Recently, however, with the spectacular performances of Canadians Kurt Browning (four-time World Champion) and Elvis Stojko (two-time Olympic silver medallist), and the 2002 Winter Olympics "SkateGate" scandal involving World and (eventually) Olympic Champions Jamie Salé and David Pelletier, more young boys are showing an interest in figure skating. In addition, families of girls who were excluded from hockey teams once they reached a certain age have brought several lawsuits. Women's hockey became an Olympic sport at Nagano in 1998, where the Canadian team won the silver medal, and in Salt Lake City in 2002 they won the gold. The old stereotypes have been stowed firmly on the backburner.

Skiing is also popular. The proximity of trails for cross-country skiing and/or hills for downhill skiing in most parts of the country makes the sport accessible to almost all Canadians. Most do it just for pleasure in the winter months but, throughout the year, competitors and devotees can be seen keeping in shape on roller skates with specially arranged wheels simulating the motion of skis.

All the other popular U.S. sports, such as cycling, tennis, golf, swimming, sailing, and jogging are also popular in Canada, depending on the availability of facilities. It is not uncommon to see lawn bowling competitions, men in their whites playing cricket, or curling. The latter is a particularly Canadian sport, which involves sliding "stones" across the ice toward a given point, the "house." Three broomsmen are employed to sweep a path for the stone, guiding it toward its destination. Whichever team is closest to the house at the end of the round wins. Both men and women play curling, and the biggest competition of the year is the Brier, televised annually. Curling also became an Olympic sport in 1998; the women's team won the gold medal, while the men brought home the silver.

There are a number of Canadian professional hockey teams in the National Hockey League. Most Americans do not realize that Governor General of Canada Lord Stanley donated the Stanley Cup, contested annually between the NHL's top two teams. The sport is regularly televised and watched by millions of Canadians, and the CBC show "Hockey Night in Canada" is a national ritual. Canada also has its own professional football league (the CFL) with somewhat different rules than U.S. football (the field is 110 yards long, there are only three downs, and more). Their final competition is the

Grey Cup in October. Finally, Canada has two major league baseball teams, the Montréal Expos and the Toronto Blue Jays. Fans whose numbers swell considerably when the team is doing well closely follow them.

106.3 Hotels and Restaurants

Hotels, motels, guesthouses, and bed and breakfast establishments can be found across Canada. The best known are those that were built by the railroad, including the magnificent Château Frontenac in Québec City, the Château Laurier in Ottawa, and the Banff Springs Hotel and Château Louise in Banff National Park. Many of these hotels have been refurbished and offer a combination of old world charm and modern convenience. Montebello, on the north shore of the Ottawa River between Ottawa and Montréal, is also a first class resort hotel, offering superb dining and a variety of sports. It was originally a hunting club for the Montréal elite built around an enormous eight-sided fireplace. The club still exists but occupies only a few rooms in the resort. Many Canadians visit these old hotels for Sunday brunch or a weekend get-away. It is recommended that you make reservations well in advance.

Bed and breakfast establishments have become increasingly popular and numerous in the last few years. Many older homes, dating from the late 19th and early 20th centuries have been renovated and now offer accommodations. The quality is high and the natural reserve and courteousness of Canadians allow guests privacy while sharing common areas with their hosts.

107 GETTING AROUND

107.1 Shopping

Shopping in Canada is much like shopping in the United States, but in general the hours are more limited except in tourist areas. Some provincial governments want to maintain Sunday as a family day, but gradually the old regulations are being replaced. Now corner grocery stores are open seven days a week, and gas stations and pharmacies are open evenings and Sundays.

Most cities in Canada have an open-air market somewhere in town. Local farmers and gardeners sell their fruits, vegetables, and flowers in stands from May to October. Restaurants, outdoor cafes, boutiques, craft exhibits, and street musicians may surround these markets. Local people and tourists all shop at these markets.

Grocery stores can be massive supermarkets, discount stores, specialty shops, or corner stores. Americans can get almost every grocery item they want here, but seasonal items and certain spices or cake mixes may take some searching.

Each province in Canada controls liquor stores and beer retail outlets. Local as well as imported beer, wine, and liquor are available at these stores. The price of any given item is consistent throughout a province but varies among provinces because of differences in

the taxes levied. In Québec, beer, wine, and cider are sold in grocery stores seven days a week. Québec liquor stores stock many bulky liquor products or domestically bottled imports not available in Ontario.

Canadian shoppers are usually more patient than Americans. Salespeople in small neighborhood shops who know their customers are often chatty and may take more time than necessary, but Canadians rarely interrupt or get impatient. In grocery stores hardly anyone picks up a magazine to read as they wait unless they plan to buy it.

Ottawa residents, coping with medium-city shopping, may make shopping expeditions to Montréal or Toronto. Both these cities have tremendous shopping, including some underground shopping malls, where you can buy almost anything. Official Americans may want to go shopping in some of the nearby U.S. communities, but Canadians do not often make such expeditions.

Be aware that sales taxes in Canada are much higher than in most parts of the United States. In Ontario, for example, the combined national Goods and Services Tax (GST) and provincial Retail Sales Tax (RST) are 15 percent. These taxes are generally only refundable if the goods are removed permanently from Canada within sixty days (GST) and Ontario within thirty days (RST). Make sure to find out what sales taxes apply in the area and budget for them before taking a shopping trip.

107.2 Transportation

Canada has excellent transportation systems. The Trans-Canada Highway links the east coast with the west. In addition, there are many limited access highways in the more populous areas of the country and well-maintained smaller roads, most of which are within 100 miles of the U.S. border where population is concentrated. Very few exist in the northern part of the country; most travel in those areas is by plane. Because of small demand, these flights can be very expensive. By contrast, east-west flights across Canada are frequent and competitively priced. There is also excellent train service all the way across Canada. Some politicians think that publicly owned trains are not well enough used to warrant extensive government subsidies and have suggested they be limited. The public response to this suggestion has been overwhelmingly negative, since it would isolate many communities. There is also good bus service connecting towns not along the railroad tracks with major metropolitan areas.

There is usually good public transportation within cities. Both Montréal and Toronto have excellent subway systems, and virtually every city has a good bus system. In Ottawa you can call to find out the bus schedule for your stop, saving long and uncomfortable waits on cold street corners. Canadians use public transportation extensively, but many still drive. Drivers are courteous—they allow cars to move in front of them and rarely blow their horns. They are fast but conservative drivers, seldom tailgating and waiting for long stretches before passing. The exception to this generalization is the Québec/Ottawa driver, who drives faster and more impatiently than other Canadians.

Bicycling is very popular in Canada, and many people in Ottawa, for example, cycle to work for exercise in the warmer months. The city is crisscrossed with beautiful bicycle paths.

Driving laws are much the same as in the United States. Canadians are more likely to wear their seat belts and have their children in car seats than their neighbors to the south, partially because police are more vigilant about ticketing for violation of these laws. Officers are courteous but firm, and do not appreciate drivers who attempt to talk their way out of a ticket.

In the far northern Inuit communities the most common winter mode of transportation is the snowmobile. Snowmobiles have replaced dog sleds in recent years, although some native people still maintain their dog teams.

107.3 Traveling In Canada

Automobile:
Canadian highways are well maintained, well marked, and, in snowy weather, cleared quickly. Structural repair to bridges and highways has not been neglected as on some roads in the United States. Road repairs start about June and continue until the first snow (some Canadians joke that they have only two seasons, winter and road repair), so driving in the good weather months can be slow and annoying at times, but at least the potholes are repaired. Road maintenance is less thorough in the Montréal area than in other Canadian cities.

Dirt or gravel roads are common in recreational areas and in the more remote regions of Canada. If you look at a road map of Canada, you realize that few roads exist north of the southern population belt. Above this belt roads are not necessary and, in some areas of northern Canada, they would be impossible to build because of permafrost. Instead, traveling is done by plane, boat, and snowmobile in such areas.

Bus and Train:
The Canadian Pacific Railroad line goes from one coast to the other. It is the backbone of the system off which branches go to small towns to the north and south. Many Canadians have ridden the entire width of the country on the passenger system, ViaRail, and some talk of showing their children the country in the same way. The train itself has dome cars, roomettes or berths, and an excellent dining car. The menu is limited, featuring meat and fish from the part of the country through which the train is passing, but the dishes are delicious and very elegantly served. Bill Coo, a retired CP conductor, has written two books (*Scenic Rail Guide to Central and Atlantic Canada* and *Scenic Rail Guide to Western Canada*) that give engaging information about the routes. These books are no longer in print, but should be available at libraries and are worth reading before boarding the train.

A good intercity bus system also exists. In addition, there are numerous tour buses run by cities or private companies.

Air:
One Canadian airline (Air Canada) is owned by the federal government, others are subsidized, and a few are privately financed. With such a long, narrow, and spread-out strip of population centers to service, private enterprise finds it difficult to charge reasonable fares without subsidies. Canadian and U.S. airlines have numerous flights between the two countries and to Europe and the Far East. The major transfer points are Montréal, Toronto, and Vancouver, although other cities, such as Ottawa, also have international flights.

108 SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS AND ROLES

108.1 Differences in Roles of Men, Women, and Children

Until recently, Canadian families were much more traditional than their American counterparts. Women held jobs and did the housework; men had careers and did the heavy work; children went to school, played hockey, or figure skated, and were taken care of by their parents. Today's young people do not accept these stereotypical roles. Women are taking programs at university which lead to careers; men are discovering the pleasures of cooking, and children are taking on more responsibility at home and often have after-school jobs as well. Family dynamics are changing in Canada.

The traditional large Roman Catholic family (40 percent of Canadians are Catholic) is a thing of the past. In recent years, Catholic families, in particular, have been having fewer children than other families. Young Anglophone families may still have a third child, but the two-child family now still the most common.

Adults' expectations for their children are similar to those of American parents. Many eastern Canadian parents encourage their children to become French/English bilingual because they know the ability to speak both languages will remove certain barriers for their children in school, on the job, and in everyday living in Canada.

Unemployment, divorce, alcohol, drugs, and violence all exist in Canada. Unemployment has generally been higher in Canada than in the United States, but the Canadian social welfare system protects the less fortunate more effectively than the U.S. system. Unemployment benefits tend to be more generous in Canada than in the United States.

Divorce is becoming more common in Canada as the power of the Catholic Church erodes and divorce laws are eased by the federal government. Separated couples usually must wait one year before a divorce is granted. Although 29 percent of Canadian marriages end in divorce, they are concentrated among young couples whose first marriage may last only a few years. However, the pressures of money, lifestyles, and changing gender roles are taking their toll on older marriages as well.

108.2 Supervisor-Employee Relationships

Canadians are typically courteous, patient, and reserved—all qualities that can foster good relationships in the workplace. However, it would be unwise to make any meaningful generalizations here, as each situation is unique.

Bilingualism can and does interfere in office/business relationships. The ability to communicate in both French and English is a requirement for many government positions, because it is national policy to provide government services in the two official languages. Many private employers also require that their employees be bilingual, if their business is frequented by both Anglophones and Francophones. Whether a second language is needed for some positions is open to debate and causes friction between those who struggle to master a new language they feel is unnecessary and those who enforce the policy.

108.3 Attitude Toward Government

According to Pierre Berton, a noted Canadian author, when Canadians talk of "peace, order and good government" they generally mean "strong government." Canadians expect that their government will care for them whenever necessary. They take for granted that there will be a strong social-welfare system; they assume the provincial governments will provide the best possible education. They expect the federal government to give contracts to providers who need jobs rather than evaluating who is best suited to provide the service. They assume welfare will pay seasonal unemployment benefits to those who are in seasonal jobs, such as fishing.

Until recently it was unusual for a Canadian to relocate his or her family in order to find better work. Canadians stayed close to their roots, waiting for better times or government intervention. This is less true now, especially among the middle and upper classes who have become more mobile, but it is still more typical of Canadian laborers than of Americans.

There is a strong feeling among western Canadians and those in the Atlantic provinces that the federal government favors "central Canada" (i.e. Ontario and Québec) when distributing federal contracts and funds. This has led to the rise of regional parties whose leaders articulate the feelings of anger and distrust their constituents feel toward Ottawa. These parties at first held seats only in provincial legislatures, but have risen to prominence in the national parliament. In 1992 when one of the major national parties (the Progressive Conservative Party) fell from power, the Québec separatist Bloc Québecois Party won enough seats to gain official opposition status. In 1997 the pro-Western Reform Party won opposition, and in 2000 the Canadian Alliance (a virtual copy of the Reform Party) rose to power. As well as gaining influence federally, these regional parties also control the provinces in which their bases of support reside. At the federal level, disagreement with the government's policies is most loudly voiced during "Question Period," a one-hour televised portion of each day's session of the House of Commons. Members of the opposition use it to cross-examine the majority party on popular issues. More thoughtful debate occurs after the cameras have been turned off.

108.4 Attitude Toward Police

The Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) are federal police who served in the past as soldiers on the frontier and as social workers to the native peoples. Today they are also the provincial police (except in Ontario and Québec). The RCMP run an active program in Ottawa to train men and horses to perform in the Musical Ride, an impressive display of choreographed riding that goes on tour each summer.

The RCMP had for years an intelligence gathering aspect in addition to its other duties. Recently the government has granted some of those responsibilities to a new agency, the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS), which collects and analyzes information but relies on the RCMP to respond to it.

Canadians feel great respect, admiration, and trust for the RCMP, but have less respect for the provincial and local police forces. Recently there have been a number of stories about abuses of power, suspected cases of bigotry, and bungled attempts at apprehending criminals. The image of all police forces except the RCMP has been tarnished by these reports, but Canadians still turn to police as their first defense. Canadian hand gun laws and traditional Canadian trust in authority and respect for the law prompt them to seek outside help rather than try to solve problems themselves.

Parenthetically, at the provincial level Québec civil law is based on the Napoleonic Code, which assumes the accused person is guilty until proven innocent. In all other provinces, civil law is based on English Common Law. Criminal law throughout Canada is based on the English law that presumes the accused is innocent until proven guilty.

108.5 Attitudes Toward Americans

Most Canadians like individual Americans because Americans provide most of the tourism revenue in Canada, are considered to be friendly, and may be familiar with areas in which some of their relatives or friends live in the United States. However, Canadians regard Americans as a collective group with envy, admiration, fear, and hostility, which coexist with a basic sense of close friendship. A 1989 public opinion poll determined that "smug" was the adjective used most frequently by Canadians to describe their American neighbors.

The relationship between Canada and the United States is complex. Until the 1930s Canada and Great Britain were tied economically, but as the United States emerged as a major industrial nation, Canada could not ignore its proximity to such a powerful presence. Lawrence Martin in his book, *The Presidents and the Prime Ministers*, explains how each Canadian government has struggled to maintain a distinct Canadian identity and economy in the presence of heavy American influence.

Canadians usually think Americans are better salespeople and more savvy in show business. Berton suggests that Canadians prefer to revere institutions rather than individuals and, therefore, people interested in individual recognition (such as those in

media and show business) go south of the border, where competition for star status takes place in a more individually oriented economic system.

Canadians often think that Americans do things bigger, better, and more efficiently. The United States has been promoting its products, people and services globally for a longer time than Canada has. Canadians often seek out products and services available in the United States, finding them considerably less expensive (Canadian federal and provincial taxes can create a large price spread on the same product), offered in a wider selection of styles, and of better quality than Canadian-produced goods.

Traditionally, Canadians have resented the extent of American ownership in Canada. Much of Canada's manufacturing sector is made up of affiliates of U.S. firms, including automobile and automotive parts factories, chemical plants, electrical production, machinery, rubber products, and mining. The "branch plant" phenomenon draws criticism from Canadian nationalists, who question the value to Canada of foreign direct investment.

Canada and the United States are each other's major trading partner, but the relationship is not always smooth. Canadian industry, with its relatively small-scale base, finds it hard to compete with American multinationals, and American industry finds the Canadian government's protectionist attitude difficult to handle. Canadians resent the amount of raw Canadian resources exported to the United States for further processing. Americans, in large part, are blamed for acid rain problems, although Canada has some polluting industries too.

Many Canadians consider Americans to be more aggressive than they themselves, which partially explains their tentative, ambivalent response to the idea of freer trade between the United States and Canada. Despite this, FTA, signed by Canadian Prime Minister Brian Mulroney and U.S. President Ronald Reagan, came into force on January 1, 1989, gradually removing subsidies and tariffs and allowing for total economic integration between the two countries. On January 1, 1994, NAFTA, signed by U.S. President Bill Clinton, Mexican President Carlos Salinas, and Canadian Prime Minister Jean Chrétien came into effect, promoting economic integration between the three nations of North America.

In the area of national defense, Canadians recognize that they are completely dependent on the United States for protection from outside forces. However, their lack of influence on U.S. defense policy makes many Canadians feel nervous when, for example, the United States wants assistance in testing weapons or if they think the U.S. government is escalating world tensions. During its tenure of influence in Canadian politics, the New Democratic Party (NDP), a socialist party, complicated the government's efforts to acquire a reasonable security force or to play a significant role in NATO.

The frequently cited "longest undefended border" between Canada and the United States is the result of a series of conscious decisions by both nations, since 1817, to demilitarize their common frontier and settle their bilateral grievances by peaceful means. However,

there are shared border concerns in terms of what kinds of people (such as terrorists) or illegal items (such as drugs or laundered funds) attempt border crossings. Several recent events have prompted stricter control along the U.S./Canadian border. In December 1999, Ahmed Ressam was arrested crossing the border from Victoria, British Columbia, to Port Angeles, Washington, with more than 100 pounds of explosives in the trunk of his car. The explosives were meant to be used to bomb Los Angeles International Airport. Ressam's arrest led to greater vigilance at the U.S. border with an increased awareness of terrorist cell activity inside Canada. In the aftermath of the terrorist attacks on the United States on September 11, 2001, all U.S. borders have been put indefinitely on a Level 1 state of alert—the highest possible. While the U.S./Canadian border is still fairly easy to cross, minor delays should be expected at busier crossings (such as the Detroit/Windsor crossing), and certainly in the event of any further attacks delays will increase.

Some Canadians still believe that Americans fit the "Yankee" image. The War of 1812, Berton suggests, helped distort the Canadian view of Americans. The term "Yankee" referred to the undisciplined, non-uniformed Americans from the south and west, who, in the eyes of the British-oriented Canadians, fought with mob-like tactics. A "Yankee" was someone who was "sharp" but also "vulgar, uncouth, and talked funny." Berton maintains that the Canadian way to fight American values was to make them (the Americans) appear vulgar and vaguely comic. "This attitude persists. Some of my countrymen sneer at American television as vulgar and commercial, while watching it avidly." Of course, many Americans do the same.

Canadians often assume Americans are richer on average than they are themselves. As mentioned earlier, the poor and unfortunate in Canada have a stronger safety net than similar Americans, but prosperous Canadians pay higher taxes than comparable individuals in the United States. The image Canadians have of the "rich American" stems from their personal contacts with well-heeled Americans visiting their country, negotiating business contracts, sharing technical information, and making the most of their leisure time. When Canadians visit the United States, they see the more leisured Americans at beaches to which they themselves have limited access. If they can, Canadians avoid the poorer sections of U.S. cities because of their fear of crime and traffic congestion. Canada's urban poor are less obvious, partly because the climate in most parts of Canada does not allow for broken windows, leaky roofs, or flimsy building materials. Few could survive exposure to Canadian winter weather. The poor in Canada do exist in cities, in rural areas, and among the native peoples scattered across western and northern Canada.

Many American officials are surprised at the detail with which Canadians follow U.S. news, personalities, and culture. They keep up with American news much more than Americans do Canadian news because changes in the United States affect their lives.

Canadians realize and are sometimes resentful that Americans know little about them and their country. You will probably need a map of Canada to explain to your friends and relatives where your Canadian posting is. By contrast, Canadians sometimes think they know more about the United States than Americans do.

Canadians admire the stability of their parliamentary system of government. They think the U.S. governmental system is subject to too many and too frequent changes. The differences of opinions between and among the U.S. executive and legislative branches seem, to many Canadians, to allow issues to go unresolved.

108.6 Attitude Toward Asian Immigrants

In the past Canada encouraged settlers because of its sparse population, promising immigrants free homesteads, rich farmland, and economic opportunity. Now, however, more restrictive policies have been introduced because of concerns that immigrants may contribute to unemployment problems.

Canada has been an attractive place, for example, for immigrants from India and Pakistan because of its high standard of living. But now, Asians are one of the most resented groups, particularly in western Canada. Despite this, some provinces established offices in Hong Kong before July 1997, hoping to convince those individuals with useful skills and investment capital to immigrate to Canada and continue to work after the British lease on the colony ended.

108.7 Attitude Toward Native Peoples

Berton maintains that the Canadian attitude toward native peoples (the Natives, Inuit, and "Métis", or mixed blood) has mainly been one of indifference. "We certainly have been callous about our Indians, but we have not been genocidal." The Canadian treatment of the Natives, the Métis, and the Inuit was, and continues to sometimes be, a matter of mercantile self-interest. Natives were used to help harvest furs, and it made sense to look after them as a people. Now the Inuit are used to help explore the Arctic areas of Canada. Native peoples were not a threat to western or northern expansion in Canada as the American Indians were in the United States. Canadian expansion was barred by geography and climate, not by the presence of native peoples. Now Natives are better educated, more articulate, and more politically united. Their land claims are interfering with Canadian exploration of the north for mineral deposits and oil. Their demands for greater equality before the law, better schools, and the right to return to their homelands are being heard in Ottawa and the provincial capitals.

At least partially as a result of these newly heard demands, in April 1999 the new territory of Nunavut officially separated from the Northwest Territories. Nunavut is an Inuit-governed territory resulting from the 1993 Nunavut Land Claims Agreement. Nunavut has the same rights as Canada’s other two territories (the Northwest Territories and the Yukon), but incorporates Inuit values into its territorial government. The working language of Nunavut is Inuktitut, but English, French, and Inuinnaqtun are also used in government.

It is important to note that while in the United States, Native Americans are still commonly known as “Indians,” this is no longer an acceptable term in Canada. Likewise,

“Eskimo” should never be used to refer to the Inuit peoples of northern Canada. Instead of “Indian,” Canadians use “Native” or “Aboriginal” or even “First Nations,” although the latter is more often a political distinction. The term “Indian” is used *only* to refer to people from the South Asian subcontinent of India.

108.8 Attitude Toward Blacks

Blacks were kept out of Canada by unofficial discriminatory immigration policies in the early 1900s. Now blacks reside in considerable numbers in Toronto (usually from the British Caribbean) and Nova Scotia (descendants of blacks who came during and after the U.S. Civil War). Canadians are very aware of the U.S. experience with its significant black population, but feel that Canadians for the most part are not emotionally affected by the presence of blacks. In Montréal and Toronto, though, racial tensions have recently increased and there have been several suspected instances of bigotry by local police forces.

109 CONCLUSION

Canada offers wonderful opportunities to all who live there, including Americans fortunate enough to be posted to the Embassy in Ottawa or one of the six Consulates General. The pace is easygoing, the people friendly, the cities relatively clean and safe, the education and medical care good to excellent, and the recreational opportunities superb. Americans tend to settle quickly and easily into their Canadian neighborhood and feel like a welcome part of the community.

However, never forget that the United States and Canada are two distinct nations with different philosophies and approaches to many issues. This Culture Guide to Canada is intended to forewarn new arrivals of some of these differences and help make the process of settling in easier.

110 GLOSSARY

Below are some terms that will help you understand and be understood in Canada.

Aboriginal: Term used to refer to non-Inuit native peoples of Canada

Anglophone: A Canadian whose main language is English, although he or she may know French or have a mother tongue of another language such as Chinese

Canadian Shield: Refers to a major geological feature of central Canada. The Shield is the massive rocky surface covering half of Canada that makes the area challenging for agricultural purposes and difficult to build on. This "rocky desert" area is one of the principal reasons why the Canadian population is situated in the south, mainly between Toronto and Montréal.

CEGEP: (pronounced *say-ZHEP*) Québecois post-secondary education required for students planning to continue to university. CEGEP stands for Collège d'enseignement général et professionel— College of General and Professional Studies

College: Refers to a post-secondary vocational institution (outside Québec)

First Nations: Term for Canadian natives, most often used to refer to political governance or movements

Francophone: A Canadian whose main language and mother tongue is French, although he or she may know other languages

Grade 3: Said instead of "third grade" (applicable to all primary and secondary school grades)

Hydro: Refers to the government-owned electric utility (regardless of whether the power source is actually hydroelectric)

Inuit: Term used to refer to people formerly commonly known as "Eskimos"

Native: Another term used to refer to non-Inuit native peoples of Canada

Nunavut: Newly created territory governed by Inuit. Formally created 1 April 1999, Nunavut occupies the eastern two-thirds of the former Northwest Territories (the remaining third is still known as the Northwest Territories).

Ontario Academic Credits (OAC): University preparatory courses taken in Ontario secondary schools. Formerly taken during Grade 13, these courses will now be spread through Grades 11 and 12.

Poutine: Typically Québecois specialty popular throughout Canada consisting of French fries covered in cheese curds and gravy

Quebeckers: Anglo term for residents of Québec, used primarily by Anglophones in Western Canada

Québecois: French term for residents of Québec (especially French speakers). Used by Francophones and throughout Atlantic Canada and Ontario (particularly by French/English bilinguals)

Saint John: Largest city in New Brunswick

St. John's: Capital city of Newfoundland

Snowbirds: Canadians, mainly senior citizens, who spend the winter in the southern

United States (especially Florida)

Terry Fox: A young Canadian with a leg lost to cancer who jogged from St. John's, Newfoundland, to Thunder Bay, Ontario, in 1980 to raise money for cancer research. His cancer recurred, the cross-country run ceased, and he died in June 1981. Significant amounts of money for cancer research have been raised in memorial runs each spring.

Tim Horton's ("Tim's"): Donut/coffee shop similar to Dunkin' Donuts or Krispy Kreme

University: Refers to a tertiary academic institution which awards Bachelor's, Master's and Doctoral degrees

Upper Canada: Former name of Ontario, given in early times because the area was along the upper reaches of the St. Lawrence River. Lower Canada refers to the province of Québec.

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